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UNCLAS AMMAN 003455

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/NGA AND PRM, CENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: IN ABSENCE OF IRAQI EMBASSY, IRAQIS IN JORDAN SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM US EMBASSY

REF: CPA BAGHDAD 041713Z JUN 03

[1](#)1. This is an action request; see para 4.

[1](#)2. Embassy Amman's front gate receptionist reports that 10 to 15 Iraqi nationals per day are approaching the embassy to seek assistance, primarily on Iraqi citizen service issues. The Iraqis explain that without a functioning Iraqi embassy in Amman, they have nowhere to turn on issues such as residency permits, permission to leave Jordan after having overstayed their legal residency, and commercial disputes. The Iraqis claim that the Iraqi embassy routinely intervened with the GOJ on their behalf to resolve these issues. The Iraqis add that they are afraid to approach GOJ authorities on their own, as most are here illegally and fear that they will be jailed or deported if they make their presence known to the GOJ. In one typical case, an Iraqi national reported to the receptionist that he has not been paid by his employer in six months and needs help in obtaining his back wages. This Iraqi reportedly wants to leave Jordan to return to Iraq but, without his wages, cannot afford either the fine for his illegal overstay or the costs of traveling to Iraq and reestablishing his life there. (NOTE: Fully half of the 250,000 to 300,000 Iraqis resident in Jordan are believed to be here illegally. As most illegal Iraqis are employed as casual laborers, they cannot afford to pay the fines required in order to leave the country legally. Those who cannot afford to pay the fines are deported and "blacklisted," their names entered on a watch list and prevented from entering Jordan again. The GOJ reportedly has decided that fines will not be levied upon Iraqis returning to Iraq; we will seek confirmation and report septel.)

[1](#)3. The front gate receptionist reports that a handful of Iraqis first began approaching the embassy for assistance in March but that the steady flow only began in the last few weeks. Since May 14, the Iraqi embassy has been shuttered, with a sign beside the door announcing that the embassy is closed and no longer able to provide services to Iraqi citizens. When conoff phoned the Iraqi embassy on June 10, an Iraqi diplomat answered the phone and said that the embassy was open only for humanitarian emergencies.

[1](#)4. Action request: Absent any specific instructions from the Department on this issue, we are informing Iraqi nationals that the US Embassy is unable to provide assistance to Iraqi nationals and suggesting that they turn to local NGOs that assist refugees and those living in refugee-like conditions. We recommend that the Coalition Provisional Authority send the Iraqi MFA inspection team to Amman as soon as possible (ref), as -- in the absence of a functioning Iraqi Embassy -- the number of Iraqis seeking assistance at the US embassy is likely to grow.

[1](#)5. CPA Baghdad minimize considered.
GNEHM